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(54) **IRRIGATION PUMP WITH ABLATION AND NON-ABLATION OPERATIONAL MODES**

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A61B 2018/00577; A61B 2018/00744;

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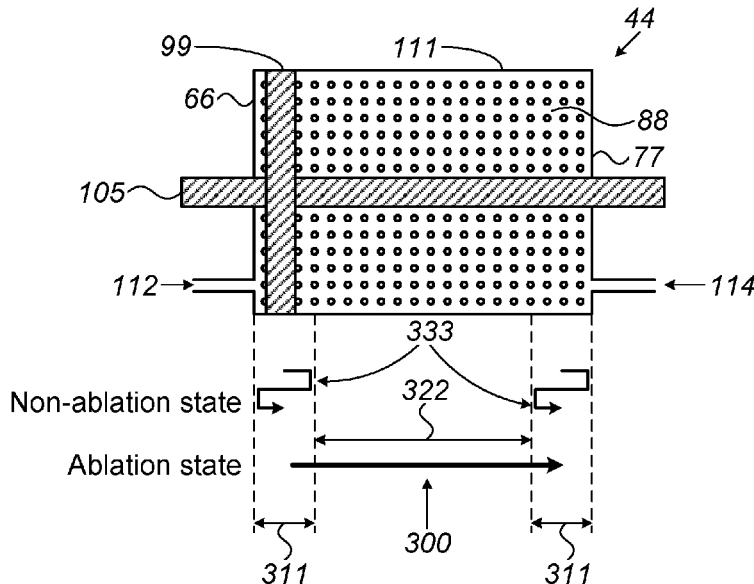
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pump includes a cylinder, a piston and a controller. The cylinder has first and second ends and includes first and second inlet-outlet ports, each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately intake a fluid to the cylinder and output the fluid from the cylinder. The piston is configured to be moved within the cylinder between the first and second ends by alternately reversing a direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The controller is configured to control the movement of the piston within the cylinder, including: (a) choosing between first and second operational modes, (b) in the first operational mode, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval that does not exceed a predefined distance from the first end or from the second end, and (c) in the second operational mode, controlling the piston to move at a selected speed between the first end and the second end.

10 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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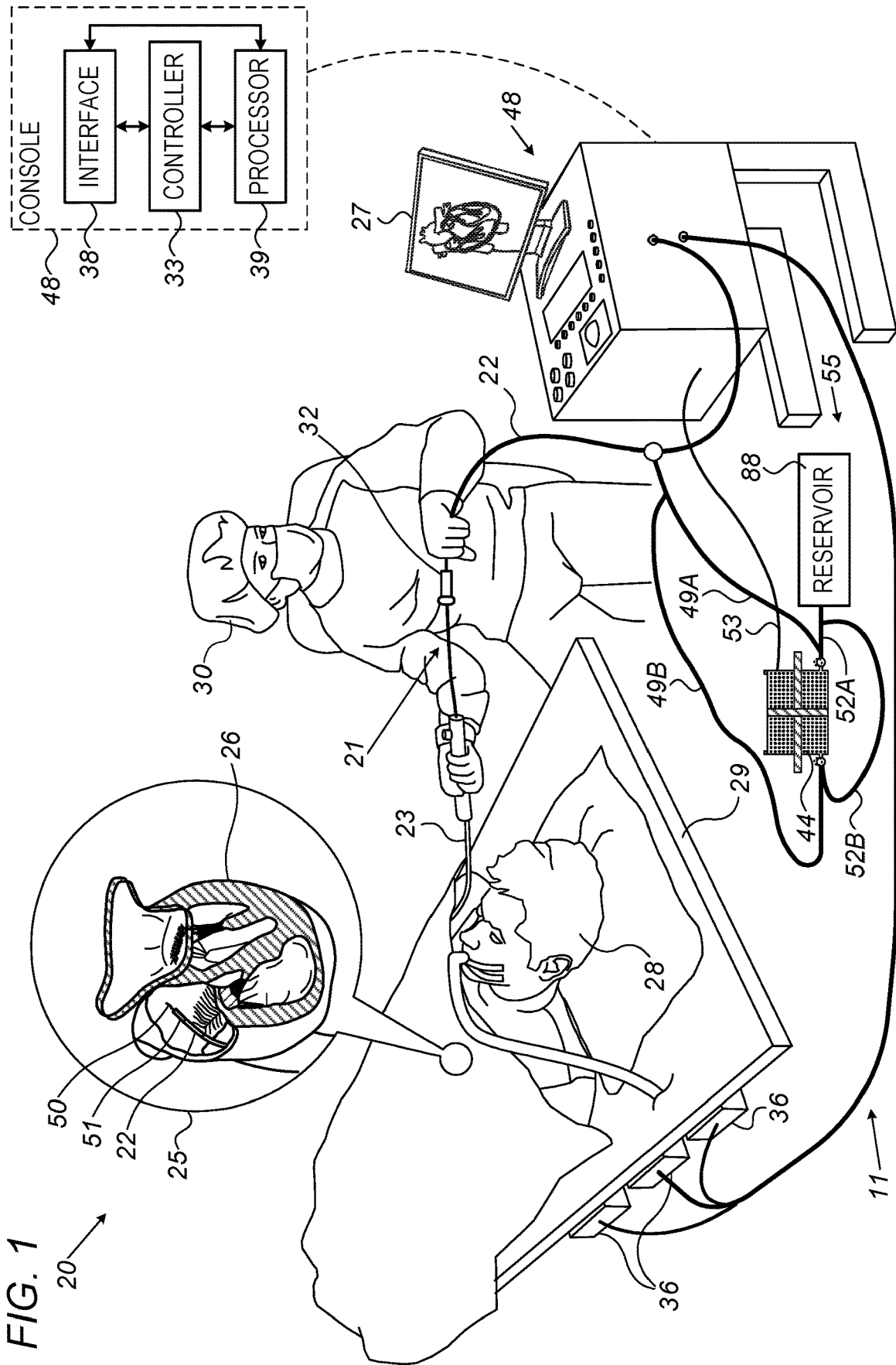


FIG. 1
20

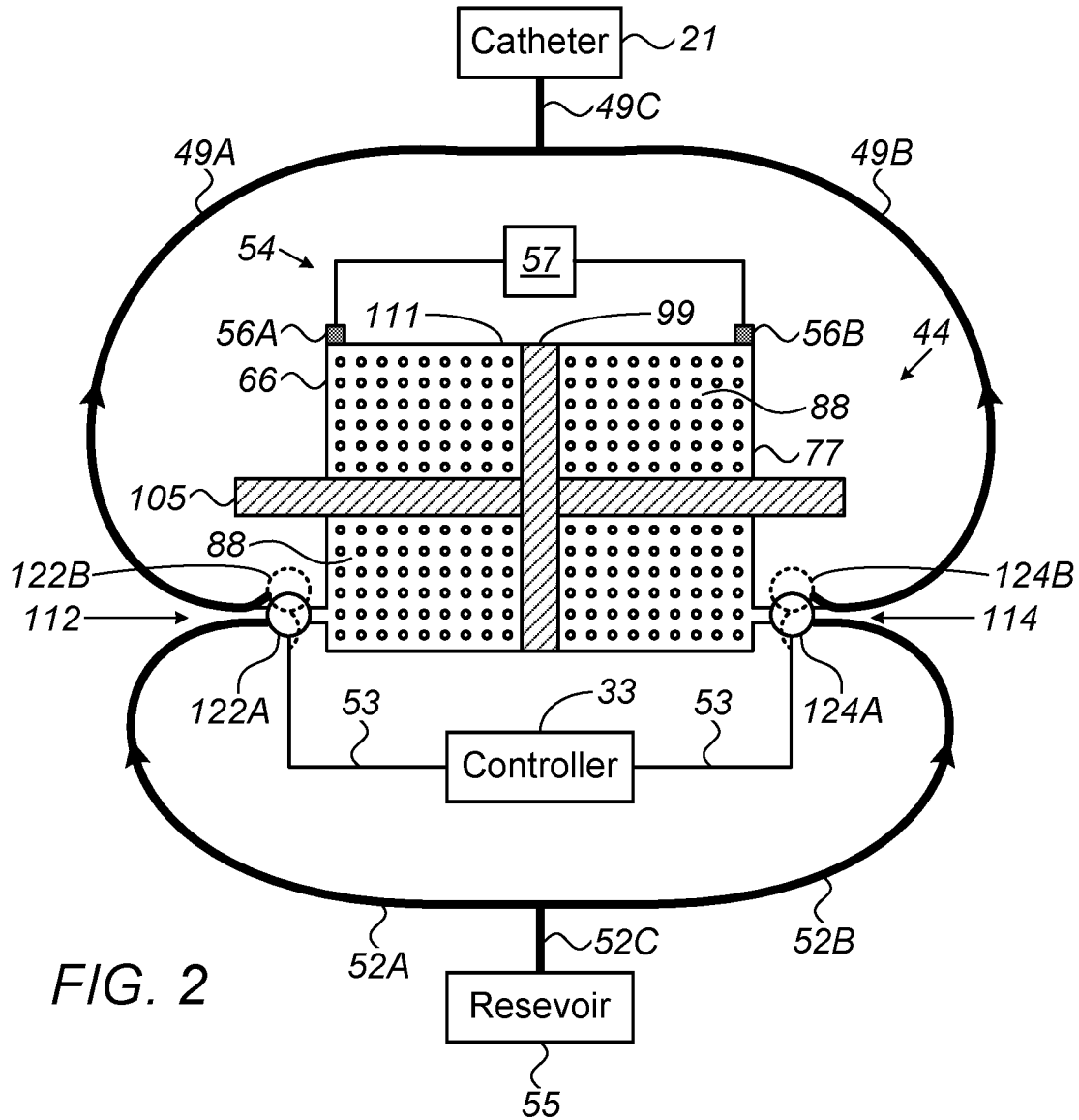


FIG. 2

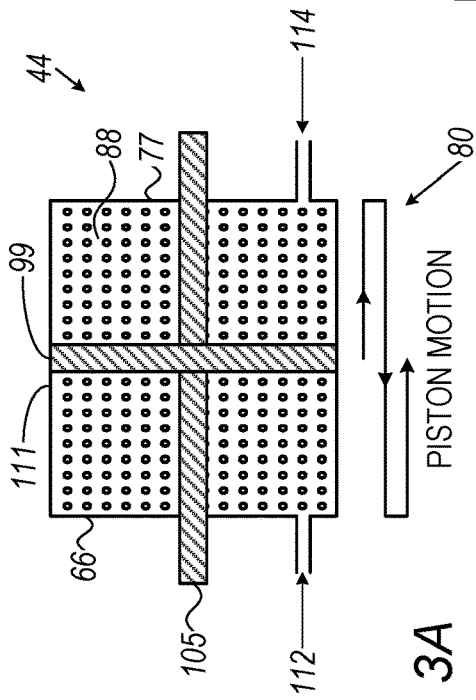


FIG. 3A

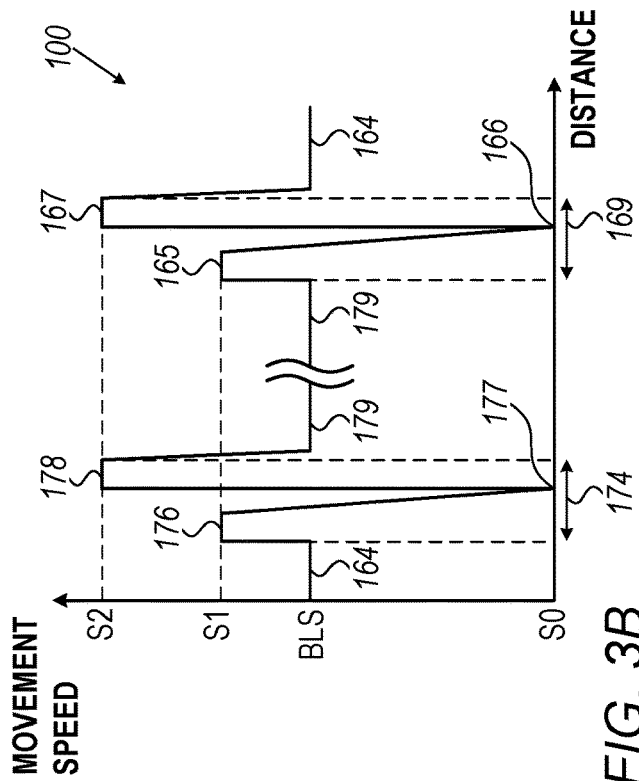


FIG. 3B

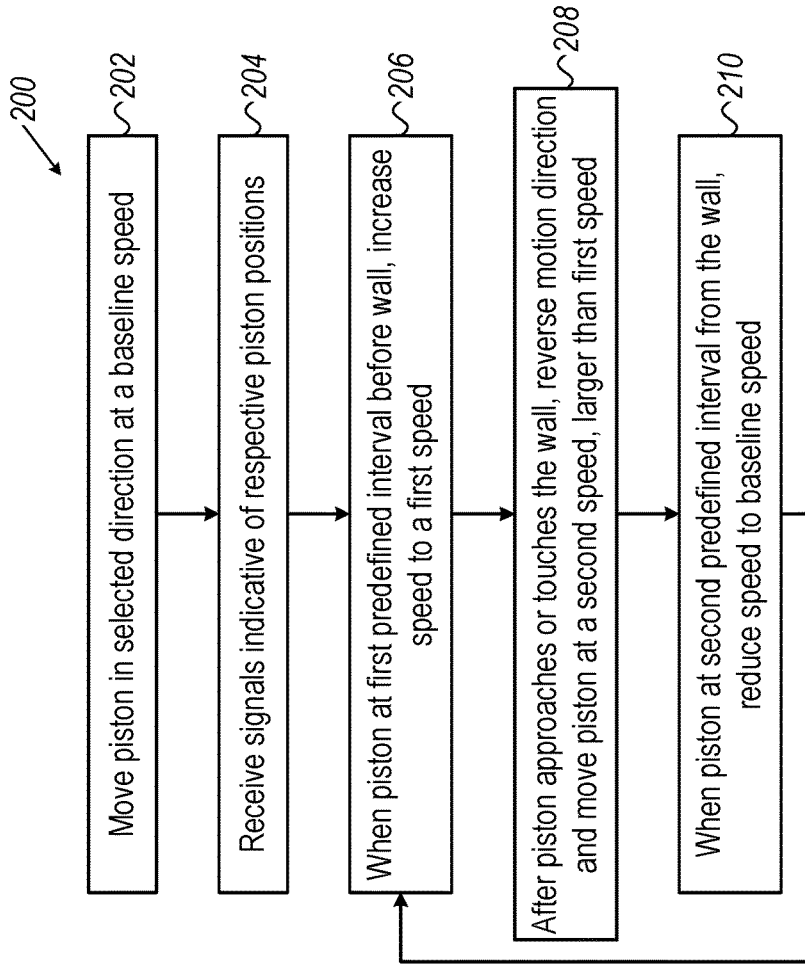


FIG. 4

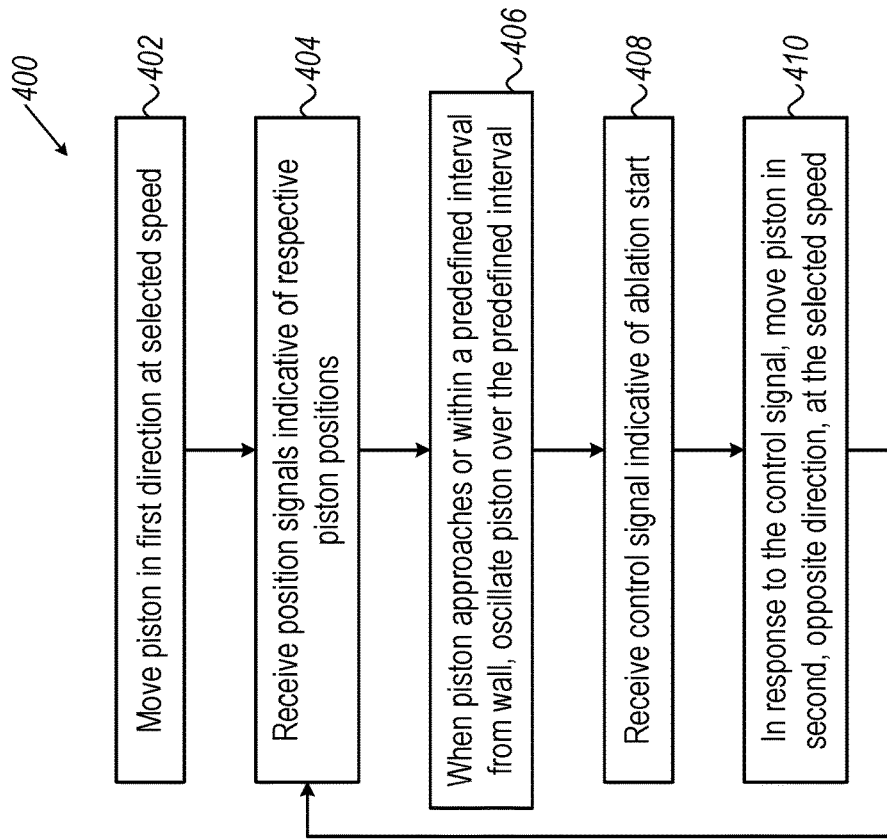


FIG. 6

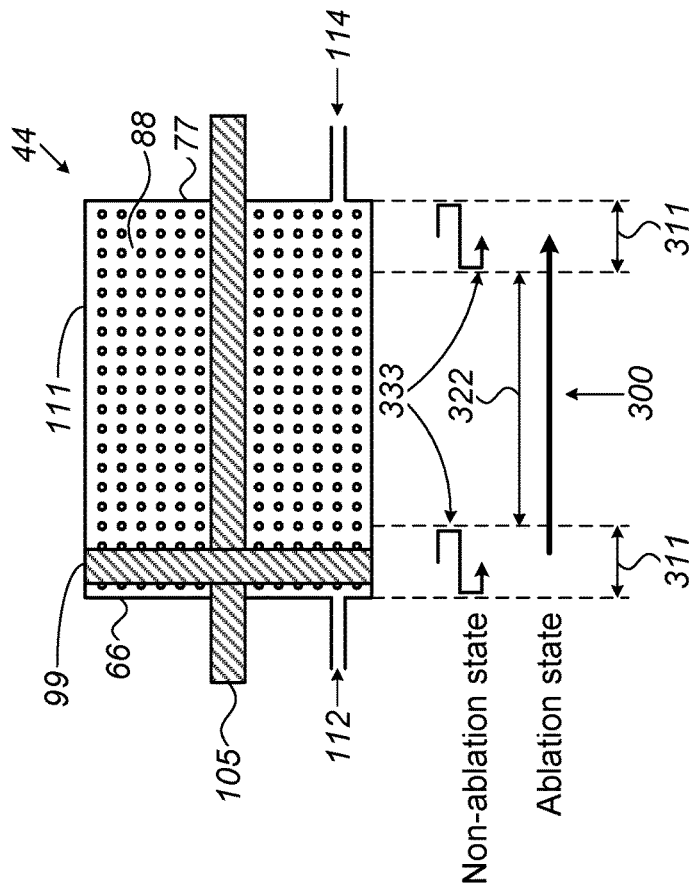


FIG. 5

IRRIGATION PUMP WITH ABLATION AND NON-ABLATION OPERATIONAL MODES

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application 62/786,404, filed Dec. 29, 2018. This application is related to a U.S. Patent Application entitled "Dual-Action Irrigation Pump with Variable Speed to Provide Constant Fluid Flow," U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/586,377, filed on Sep. 27, 2019, now U.S. Pat. No. 11,730,882, each of the prior applications is hereby incorporated by reference as if set forth in full herein this application.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to pumps, and particularly to medical irrigation pumps.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Irrigation pumps are used in some medical procedures. Various techniques have been developed for improving performance of medical irrigation pumps.

For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,913,933 describes a method for improving the fluid dispense rate in a metering system utilizing speed includes the steps of modifying the fluid flow rate profile during a portion thereof so as substantially increase or decrease the speed of the motor during certain portions of a metering cycle in order to improve the efficiency of the metering system.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,066,282 describes a disposable, positive-displacement piston pump, having a polycarbonate body, a piston, an inlet valve, and an outlet valve. The outlet valve is connected to an exit chamber, which is separated from the exit valve by an elastomeric membrane. The elastomeric membrane encloses an accumulation chamber which is filled with a fluid such as air under atmospheric pressure. Pulsations in outlet pressure caused by stroking of the piston are dampened by the flexing action of the elastomeric membrane, compressing the fluid within the accumulator chamber.

U.S. Pat. No. 9,622,814 describes an ablation catheter which controls the temperature and reduces the coagulation of biological fluids on an electrode of a catheter, prevents the impedance rise of tissue in contact with the electrode, and maximizes the potential energy transfer to the tissue, thereby allowing an increase in the lesion size produced by the ablation. The electrode includes passages positioned to allow saline flow out of an inner cavity of the electrode. This fluid flow is pulsatile to increase turbulence, reducing areas of stagnant flow, and produces a desired cooling effect.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An embodiment of the present invention that is described herein provides a pump including a cylinder, a piston and a controller. The cylinder includes first and second inlet-outlet ports, each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately intake a fluid to the cylinder and output the fluid from the cylinder. The piston is configured to be moved within the cylinder in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses a direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The controller is configured to control the movement of the piston within the cylinder, including setting to the

piston: (a) a first speed, during a first predefined interval that precedes reversing the direction of movement, (b) a second speed, larger than the first speed, during a second predefined interval that follows reversing the direction, and (c) a baseline speed, smaller than the first speed, outside the first and second intervals.

In some embodiments, the pump includes a piston position sensing assembly (PPSA), which is configured to produce a control signal indicative of a position of the piston within the cylinder, the controller is configured to receive the control signal, and to control the movement of the piston based on the control signal. In other embodiments, the controller is configured to control the movement of the piston between first and second ends of the cylinder, the PPSA includes (a) a first electrical switch configured to produce a first position signal when the piston is situated within a predefined distance from the first end, and (b) a second electrical switch configured to produce a second position signal when the piston is situated within a predefined distance from the second end, and the PPSA is configured to produce the control signal based on at least one of the first and second position signals.

In an embodiment, the controller is configured to control a given volume of the fluid to be pumped through the first and second inlet-outlet ports during a first time period including at least the first and second predefined intervals, and to control the same given volume of the fluid to be pumped through the first and second inlet-outlet ports during a second time period that is approximately equal to the first time period, when the piston is outside the first and second intervals. In another embodiment, at least one of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is coupled to a fluid reservoir via a first pipe, and to a catheter via a second pipe, so as to irrigate tissue with the fluid during a medical procedure.

There is additionally provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a method for pumping a fluid in a medical procedure, the method includes, in a pump including a cylinder having first and second inlet-outlet ports for alternately in-taking a fluid to the cylinder and outputting the fluid from the cylinder by each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports, moving a piston within the cylinder in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses a direction of movement of the piston so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The movement of the piston within the cylinder is controlled, including setting to the piston: (a) a first speed, during a first predefined interval that precedes reversing the direction of movement, (b) a second speed, larger than the first speed, during a second predefined interval that follows reversing the direction, and (c) a baseline speed, smaller than the first speed, outside the first and second intervals.

There is further provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a pump that includes a cylinder, a piston and a controller. The cylinder has first and second ends and includes first and second inlet-outlet ports, each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately intake a fluid to the cylinder and output the fluid from the cylinder. The piston is configured to be moved within the cylinder between the first and second ends by alternately reversing a direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The controller is configured to control the movement of the piston within the cylinder, including: (a) choosing between first and second operational modes, (b) in the first operational mode, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval that does not exceed a predefined distance from the first end or from the second end, and (c)

in the second operational mode, controlling the piston to move at a selected speed between the first end and the second end.

In some embodiments, the controller is configured to receive a signal indicative of a position of the piston within the cylinder, and to control the movement of the piston based on the signal. In other embodiments, at least one of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is coupled to a fluid reservoir via a first pipe, and to a catheter via a second pipe, so as to irrigate tissue with the fluid during a medical procedure. In yet other embodiments, the medical procedure includes tissue ablation by the catheter, and the controller is configured to choose the second operational mode in response to receiving a control signal indicative of the tissue ablation.

In an embodiment, the tissue ablation includes positioning the catheter at first and second ablation sites, and, in the second operational mode, the controller is configured to control the piston to: (a) move at a first selected speed when the catheter is positioned at the first ablation site, and (b) move at a second, different, selected speed when the catheter is positioned at the second ablation site. In another embodiment, in the second operational mode, the controller is configured to control the piston to move at a constant speed. In yet another embodiment, in the second operational mode, the controller is configured to control the piston to move at a variable speed.

There is additionally provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a method for pumping a fluid in a medical procedure, the method includes in a pump including a cylinder having first and second ends and including first and second inlet-outlet ports for alternately in-taking a fluid to the cylinder and outputting the fluid from the cylinder by each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports, moving a piston within the cylinder between the first and second ends by alternately reversing a direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The movement of the piston within the cylinder, including: (a) choosing between first and second operational modes, (b) in the first operational mode, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval that does not exceed a predefined distance from the first end or from the second end, and (c) in the second operational mode, controlling the piston to move at a selected speed between the first end and the second end.

There is further provided, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a pump that includes a cylinder, a piston and a controller. The cylinder has first and second ends and including first and second inlet-outlet ports, each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately intake a fluid to the cylinder and output the fluid from the cylinder. The piston is configured to be moved within the cylinder between the first and second ends by alternately reversing a direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. The controller is configured to control the movement of the piston within the cylinder, including: (a) choosing between first and second operational modes, (b) in the first operational mode, controlling the piston to remain stationary at a predefined distance larger than zero from the first end or from the second end, and (c) in the second operational mode, controlling the piston to move at a selected speed between the first end and the second end.

The present invention will be more fully understood from the following detailed description of the embodiments thereof, taken together with the drawings in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a catheter-based ablation system, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic, side view of an irrigation pump of an ablation system, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3A is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a movement of a piston within a cylinder of a medical irrigation pump, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3B is a graph that schematically illustrates a movement profile of a piston in a cylinder of a medical irrigation pump, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a flow chart that schematically illustrates a method for flowing a constant output of irrigation fluid over time, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a movement profile of a piston in an irrigation pump used in a cardiac ablation procedure, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 6 is a flow chart that schematically illustrates a method for pumping irrigation fluid in a cardiac ablation procedure, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

Overview

Some cardiac procedures comprise tissue ablation, such as radio-frequency (RF) ablation, carried out at predefined sites of a patient heart for treating arrhythmia. An RF ablation system typically comprises ablation electrodes that are coupled to a distal end of a catheter, and a navigation subsystem, such as a magnetic position tracking subsystem, for navigating the catheter distal-end to the ablation sites. The RF ablation system further comprises an irrigation assembly for irrigating the ablated tissue with irrigation fluids. It is important to irrigate the tissue before and during ablation, using controlled irrigation parameters such as flow rates, without introducing electrical noise that may interfere with magnetic fields of the magnetic position tracking subsystem.

Embodiments of the present invention that are described hereinbelow provide methods and apparatus for improving control of irrigation parameters during ablation procedures. In some embodiments, an irrigation assembly comprises (a) a fluid reservoir containing the irrigation fluid, (b) one or more irrigation openings at a catheter distal-end, for irrigating tissue of a patient heart, and (c) a pump, which is configured to pump the irrigation fluid between the reservoir and irrigation openings.

In some embodiments, the pump comprises a cylinder having first and second ends, also referred to herein as walls, and comprising first and second inlet-outlet ports, each of which is coupled to the reservoir and the catheter. Each of the inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately, intake the fluid from the reservoir to the cylinder and output the fluid from the cylinder to the catheter distal end. The pump comprises a piston, which is configured to be moved within the cylinder between the first and second walls by alternately reversing the direction of movement of the piston, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports.

In some embodiments, the pump further comprises a controller, which is configured to control the movement of the piston within the cylinder. The controller is configured to choose between ablation and non-ablation operational modes of the pump. In the ablation operational mode, the controller is configured to control the piston to move at a selected speed between the first wall and the second wall, so as to irrigate the ablated site. In the non-ablation operational mode, the controller is configured to control the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval that does not exceed a predefined distance from the first wall or from the second wall of the cylinder, so as to maintain low irrigation flows between the tissue ablations. In some embodiments, the controller is configured to receive a signal indicative of the position of the piston within the cylinder, and to control the movement of the piston based on the signal. The controller is further configured to receive a control signal, and to choose between the non-ablation and ablation operational modes based on the control signal.

In other embodiments, the piston is configured to be moved between the walls, in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses a direction of movement of the piston at the walls, so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports. In such embodiments, the controller is configured to control the movement of the piston between the walls, including setting to the piston: (a) a first speed, during a first preset interval from the wall that precedes reversing the direction of movement, (b) a second speed, larger than the first speed, during a second preset interval from the wall that follows reversing the direction, and (c) a baseline speed, smaller than the first speed, outside the first and second preset intervals. The controller is configured to set the size of the first and second preset intervals and the corresponding first and second speeds, in order to control the flow rate of the irrigation fluid relative to the specified flow rate, and when applicable, to maintain a constant flow rate through the inlet-outlet ports when the piston reverses directions.

The disclosed techniques improve the patient safety and the quality of ablation procedures by improving control of the irrigation parameters during ablation and between ablations of the heart tissue.

In the context of the present invention and in the claims, the terms “pump” and “irrigation pump” may refer to a dual-action pump or any other suitable type of pump.

System Description

FIG. 1 is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a catheter-based ablation system 20, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. System 20 comprises a catheter 21, having a shaft distal end 22 that is navigated by a physician 30 into a heart 26 of a patient 28 via the vascular system. In some embodiments, physician 30 inserts shaft distal end 22 through a sheath 23, while manipulating distal end 22 using a manipulator 32 located at the proximal end of catheter 21.

Reference is now made to an inset 25. In some embodiments, system 20 comprises a magnetic sensor 51, also referred to herein as a magnetic position tracking sensor, or sensor 51 for brevity, and an ablation catheter 50, which are coupled to distal end 22.

In the embodiments, catheter 21 may be used for various procedures, such as electrophysiological (EP) mapping of heart 26 and for ablating selected tissue of heart 26. Catheter 21 comprises irrigation openings for irrigating tissue of heart 26 during the EP procedure and in particular during ablation as will be described in detail below.

In some embodiments, the proximal end of catheter 21 is electrically connected to a control console 48 and, in parallel, to an irrigation assembly 11 that supplies irrigation fluid 88, also referred to herein as fluid 88 for brevity, for the ablation and other procedures carried out by system 20. In an embodiment, console 48 comprises a processor 39, a controller 33 and interface circuit 38, which is configured to exchange signals between processor 39 and/or controller 33, and various components, modules and assemblies of system 20, as will be described in detail below.

In some embodiments, interface circuits 38 are configured to receive electrical signals from catheter 21 and other sensors of system 20. Circuits 38 are further configured to send electrical signals, received from processor 39 and controller 33, to various components and assemblies of system 20, such as applying power via catheter 21 for ablating tissue of heart 26, and for controlling the other components and assemblies of system 20. For example, during ablation, catheter 21 is configured to irrigate the ablated tissue with irrigation fluid as will be described in detail below. In an embodiment, processor 39 is configured to control ablation electrodes (not shown), disposed at distal end 22, to apply radiofrequency (RF) energy to tissue of heart 26. As will be described in detail below, controller 33 is configured to apply irrigation fluid 88 to the tissue, e.g., during the ablation procedure.

In some embodiments, system 20 comprises multiple (e.g., three) magnetic field generators 36, configured to produce alternating magnetic fields. Field generators 36 are placed at known positions external to patient 28, for example, below a patient table 29.

In some embodiments, console 48 further comprises a display 27, and a driver circuit (not shown), which is configured to drive magnetic field generators 36.

During an EP procedure physician 30 navigates distal end 22 of catheter 21 in heart 26. In some embodiments, in response to the magnetic fields irradiated from field generators 36, magnetic sensor 51 is configured to produce a position signal, indicative of the position of distal end 22 in heart 26.

In some embodiments, based on the position signal received from sensor 51, processor 39 is configured to display, e.g., on display 27, the position of distal end 22 in the coordinate system of system 20.

This method of position sensing is implemented, for example, in the CARTO™ system, produced by Biosense Webster Inc. (Irvine, Calif.) and is described in detail in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,391,199, 6,690,963, 6,484,118, 6,239,724, 6,618,612 and 6,332,089, in PCT Patent Publication WO 96/05768, and in U.S. Patent Application Publications 2002/0065455 A1, 2003/0120150 A1 and 2004/0068178 A1.

In some embodiments, irrigation assembly 11 comprises a pump 44, in the present example an irrigation pump whose structure and functionality are described, for example, in FIGS. 2, 3A and 5 below. Irrigation assembly 11 further comprises a fluid reservoir 55, which is configured to contain irrigation fluid 88, such as a saline solution or any other type of fluid suitable for irrigating tissue of heart 26.

In some embodiments, irrigation assembly 11 comprises tubes 52A and 52B, configured to flow fluid 88 between reservoir 55 and pump 44. Irrigation assembly 11 further comprises tubes 49A and 49B, configured to flow fluid 88 between pump 44 and catheter 21.

In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to receive, via a cable 53, electrical signals indicative of control parameters of irrigation assembly 11. Based on the control parameters, controller 33 is configured to control the

flow of fluid **88** to distal end **22** and within irrigation assembly **11**. Embodiments of method and apparatus for controlling the flow of fluid **88** are described in detail in FIGS. 2-6 below.

Processor **39** and/or controller **33** typically comprise a general-purpose processor or controller, which is programmed in software to carry out the functions described herein. The software may be downloaded to Processor **39** and controller **33** in electronic form, over a network, for example, or it may, alternatively or additionally, be provided and/or stored on non-transitory tangible media, such as magnetic, optical, or electronic memory.

Controlling Fluid Pumping in a Pump

FIG. 2 is a schematic, side view of pump **44**, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In some embodiments, pump **44** comprises a cylinder **111**, which is configured to contain irrigation fluid **88** for irrigating tissue of heart **26**. Pump **44** further comprises a piston **99**, which is configured to be moved within cylinder **111**, e.g., along a shaft **105**, using a stepper motor (not shown), or any suitable type of motion apparatus, such as but not limited to any other type of suitable motor or actuator. In the example of pump **44**, cylinder **111** and piston **99** have, both, a circular cross-section. Pump **44** can be a modified version of pump **10** shown and described in U.S. Provisional Patent Application 62/786,404, filed Dec. 29, 2018.

In the context of the present patent application and in the claims, the term “cylinder” refers, as a term of art, to any suitable container in which piston **99**, or any other suitable type of piston, moves. In this context, the cylinder and the piston may have any suitable cross-section, not necessarily circular.

In some embodiments, cylinder **111** has a left wall **66** and a right wall **77**, also referred to herein, respectively, as “first and second ends” of cylinder **111**, or as “walls **66** and **77**,” for brevity. In some embodiments, cylinder **111** comprises inlet-outlet ports **112** and **114**, formed in walls **66** and **77**, respectively.

In the context of the present patent application and in the claims, the respective terms “inlet-outlet ports **112** and **114**,” “port **112** and **114**,” and “first and second inlet-outlet ports,” are used interchangeably and refer to openings in cylinder **111**. In an embodiment, each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports is configured to alternately, intake fluid **88** to cylinder **111** and output fluid **88** from cylinder **111**.

In some embodiments, each of inlet-outlet ports **112** and **114** may have two openings. Note that in the side view of FIG. 2, both openings are in the same plane (which is orthogonal to the plane of FIG. 2), therefore the second opening is hidden behind the first opening and both openings are shown as a single opening. In some embodiments, the first opening of inlet-outlet port **112** is coupled, via a valve **122A**, to tube **52A**, and the second opening of inlet-outlet port **112** is coupled, via a valve **122B**, to tube **49A**. Similarly, the first opening of inlet-outlet port **114** is coupled, via a valve **124A**, to tube **52B**, and the second opening of inlet-outlet port **114** is coupled, via a valve **124B**, to tube **49B**.

In some embodiments, tubes **49A** and **49B** are coupled to a common tube **49C**, which is also coupled to catheter **21**. Similarly, tubes **52A** and **52B** are coupled to a common tube **52C**, which is also coupled to reservoir **55**.

In some embodiments, in a pump, such as pump **44**, each of inlet-outlet ports **112** and **114** exchanges fluid **88** with two entities, in the present example, reservoir **55** and catheter **21**. Each of valves **122A**, **122B**, **124A** and **124B**, is configured

to enable the flow of fluid **88** in one direction and to block the flow of fluid **88** in the opposite direction (e.g., a one-way valve), and also to reverse the flow direction. Controller **33** is configured to control the flow direction of fluid **88** by switching the movement direction of piston **99**. In such embodiments, the movement of piston **99** determines the flow direction in the aforementioned valves. For example, when piston **99** is moved toward wall **77**, valve **122A** intakes fluid **88** from reservoir **55**, via tubes **52C** and **52A**, into cylinder **111**, and at the same time, valve **124B** outputs fluid **88** from cylinder **111**, via tubes **49B** and **49C**, into catheter **21**. In alternative embodiments, controller **33** is configured to control, via electrical cables **53**, the flow direction of valves **122A**, **122B**, **124A** and **124B**. In this embodiment, valves **122A**, **122B**, **124A** and **124B** can be in the form electrically operated solenoid valves.

In some embodiments, piston **99** is moved within cylinder **111** in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses the direction of movement of piston **99**, so as to pump fluid **88** through inlet-outlet ports **112** and **114**. For example, when piston **99** is moved in a reversed direction toward left wall **66**, valve **122B** enables outflow of fluid **88** that is disposed between piston **99** and wall **66** to flows from pump **44**, via port **112** and tubes **49A** and **49C**, into catheter **21** for irrigating tissue of heart **26**. At the same time, valve **124A** enables flow of fluid **88** from reservoir **55**, via tubes **52C** and **52B** and through port **114**, into cylinder **111**.

In some embodiments, pump **44** comprises a piston position sensing assembly (PPSA) **54**, which is configured to sense the position of piston **99** along shaft **105**, and to produce a signal indicative of the position of piston **99** within cylinder **111**. In some embodiments, PPSA **54** comprises any suitable type of position sensor. In the example of FIG. 2, PPSA **54** comprises electrical switches **56A** and **56B**, disposed in close proximity to walls **66** and **77**, respectively. In some embodiments, electrical switches **56A** and **56B** are electrically coupled to a controller **57** that is electrically connected to controller **33**. In other embodiments, electrical switches **56A** and **56B** may be electrically coupled directly to controller **33**.

In some embodiments, PPSA **54** may be calibrated during the assembly of system **20** and/or at least prior to the first medical procedure that requires irrigation. During the calibration, controller **33** controls the movement of piston along shaft **105**, between walls **66** and **77**. When piston reaches wall **66**, electrical switch **56A** sends to controller **57**, a signal indicative of the position of piston **99**. Subsequently, controller **33** controls the movement of piston **99**, within cylinder **111**, to wall **77**, and count steps of the stepper motor. When piston **99** reaches wall **77**, electrical switch **56B** sends to controller **57**, a signal indicative of the position of piston **99**, and controller **57** concludes the calibration.

In some embodiments, based on the calibration, the counted number of steps and the direction thereof, controller **57** may send to controller **33** the aforementioned signal indicative of the position of piston **99** within cylinder **111**.

In alternative embodiments, piston **99** may not make physical contact with walls **66** and **77**, but approaches the walls, e.g., within a predefined distance of a few millimeters or any other suitable distance.

In other embodiments, PPSA **54** may have any other suitable configuration, using any suitable technique for producing the signals indicative of the current position of piston **99** within cylinder **111**.

This particular configuration of irrigation assembly **11** and system **20** is shown by way of example, in order to illustrate certain problems that are addressed by embodiments of the

present invention and to demonstrate the application of these embodiments in enhancing the performance of such a system. Embodiments of the present invention, however, are by no means limited to this specific sort of example system, and the principles described herein may similarly be applied to other sorts of medical ablation and/or irrigation systems.

FIG. 3A is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a movement of piston 99 within cylinder 111 during irrigation, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to control the movement of piston 99 in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses the direction of movement of piston 99 using a movement profile 80, so as to pump fluid 88 at a constant rate.

Note that controller 33 has to change the movement direction when piston 99 reaches any of walls 66 and 77, therefore, piston 99 stands still (i.e., remains stationary) at walls 66 and 77 before changing direction. In other words, the movement speed of piston 99 when positioned at walls 66 and 77 is zero, and therefore, fluid 88 is not pumped at these positions. In an embodiment, controller 33 is configured to maintain the constant flow rate of fluid 88 using a technique described in FIG. 3B below.

In other embodiments, piston 99 does not make physical contact with at least one of walls 66 and 77. In such embodiments, controller 33 may change the movement direction before piston 99 reaches any of walls 66 and 77. For example, controller 33 may change the movement direction of piston 99 when piston 99 approaches wall 66 within a predetermined interval of a few millimeters, or within any other suitable predefined interval.

Controlling Constant Rate of Fluid Pumping Using a Pump

FIG. 3B is a graph 100 that schematically illustrates a movement profile of piston 99 within cylinder 111 during irrigation, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In some embodiments, graph 100 shows the movement speed of piston 99 as a function of the position of piston 99 in accordance with movement profile 80 shown in FIG. 3A above. For the sake of conceptual clarity, graph 100 is divided into multiple section corresponding to the position of piston 99 within cylinder 111.

In some embodiments, when piston 99 is positioned at section 164, which is situated between walls 66 and 77 as shown in FIG. 3A, controller 33 is configured to move piston 99 toward wall 77 at a baseline speed, referred to as "BLS" on the movement speed axis of graph 100. Note that the BLS, depends the dimensions of cylinder 111 defining the volume of fluid 88, and also based on the predefined parameters of the ablation procedure, such as but not limited to the ablation power and the target temperature of the ablated tissue.

As described above, piston 99 is moved toward wall 77 and PPSA 54 sends signals indicative of the respective positions of piston 99 within cylinder 111. Note that controller 33 reverses the movement direction of piston 99 upon reaching walls 66 and 77, or in close proximity to the wall.

In some embodiments, when piston 99 is at a predefined interval 176 (e.g., about 1 mm or any other suitable interval) from wall 77, controller 33 receives from PPSA a signal indicative of the corresponding position thereof, and in response, controller 33 sets to piston a first speed, S1, which is larger than BLS.

In the context of the present disclosure and in the claims, the terms "about" or "approximately" for any numerical

values or ranges indicate a suitable dimensional tolerance that allows the part or collection of components to function for its intended purpose as described herein. More specifically, "about" or "approximately" may refer to the range of values $\pm 20\%$ of the recited value, e.g. "about 90%" may refer to the range of values from 71% to 99%.

In some embodiments, when piston 99 is in close proximity (e.g. about 2 mm) to wall 77, controller may reduce the speed of piston 99 to a complete stop, shown as a speed "S0" at point 177, which corresponds to piston 99 having physical contact with wall 77, or is within a predetermined interval from wall 77.

In some embodiments, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston 99 makes physical contact with wall 77 (or is within a predetermined interval therefrom), controller 33 is configured to reverse the movement direction of piston 99 toward wall 66, and to set to piston 99 a movement speed S2 shown at a predefined interval 178 of graph 100. Note that intervals 176 and 178 may overlap in position (e.g., both are in proximity to wall 77), but having piston moved in different directions, and therefore, are shown as different intervals in graph 100.

In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to compensate for the reduced flow rate of pump 44 caused by the complete stop at wall 77 (corresponding to point 177), by setting to piston 99 speed S1 at interval 176 that precedes reversing the direction of movement, and speed S2 at interval 178 that follows reversing the direction of movement. As described above, speed S2 is larger than S1 and both speeds S1 and S2 are larger than BLS, this sequence results in a flow rate increase of pump 44 so as to compensate for the reduced flow rate when piston is situated in close proximity to, and is making contact with wall 77.

In such embodiments, at a first time interval referred to herein as a section 174 of graph 100, pump 44 flows (e.g., to catheter 21) at a given time, volume of fluid 88 similar to the volume flown by pump 44 if piston 99 were moved at the BLS speed. In other words, controller 33 sets pump 44 to retain constant flow of fluid 88 also when reversing the direction of movement at walls 66 and 77.

In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to set speeds S1 and S2 and the physical dimensions of intervals 176 and 178 using any suitable arrangement that obtains the aforementioned constant flow of fluid 88 by pump 44. In such embodiments, controller 33 may set intervals 176 and 178 to have similar or different physical travel and/or duration relative to one another. For example, controller 33 may set speed S2 substantially larger than speed S1, and interval 178 shorter than interval 176, or may use any other suitable combination of speeds and interval durations for optimizing the flow rate of pump 44.

In some embodiments, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 178, controller 33 controls the movement of piston 99 toward wall 66 at a predefined interval 179 situated outside intervals 176 and 178, and sets the speed of piston 99 to BLS.

In some embodiments, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 179, controller 33 sets the speed of piston 99 to S1 at a predefined interval 165 that precedes reversing the direction of movement at wall 66.

Using the same sequence described above for point 177, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 165, controller 33 reduces the moving speed of piston 99 to a complete stop at

point 166, which corresponds to piston 99 having physical contact with wall 66 or is within a predetermined interval therefrom.

In some embodiments, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston 99 makes physical contact with (or is within a predetermined interval from) wall 66, controller 33 is configured to reverse the movement direction of piston 99 toward wall 77, and to set to piston 99 movement speed S2 at a predefined interval 167 that follows reversing the direction of movement.

In some embodiments, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston 99 has concluded travelling along interval 167, controller 33 controls the movement of piston 99 toward wall 77 at interval 164 situated outside intervals 165 and 167, and sets the speed of piston 99 to BLS.

In some embodiments, at a second time interval referred to herein as a section 169 of graph 100, pump 44 flows (e.g., to catheter 21) at a given time, volume of fluid 88 similar to the volume flown by pump 44 if piston 99 were moved at the BLS speed, as described for section 174 above.

In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured, in response to a signal received from processor 39, to move piston 99 within cylinder 111 in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses the direction of movement of piston 99, so as to pump fluid 88 through inlet-outlet ports 112 and 114. When physician 30 decides to stop irrigating tissue of heart 26, or when system 20 stops the irrigation automatically, processor 39 sends a signal to controller 33 to stop moving piston 99 within cylinder 111, and the irrigation stops.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart 200 that schematically illustrates a method for flowing a constant output of irrigation fluid 88 by pump 44, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The method begins at a piston movement step 202 with controller 33 receives a control signal from processor 39 to irrigate tissue of heart 26 with irrigation fluid 88, and controlling the movement of piston 99 in selected direction at baseline speed (BLS), as described in interval 164 of FIG. 3B above.

At a position signal receiving step 204, controller 33 receives from PPSA 54 signals indicative of the respective positions of piston 99 moved toward wall 77, as described in FIG. 3B above. At a first speed setting step 206, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 164, controller 33 controls the movement of piston 99 toward wall 77 at speed S1 along interval 176. Subsequently, when approaching wall 77, controller 33 reduces the speed of piston 99 to a complete stop when reaching wall 77, as described in FIG. 3B above.

At a second speed setting step 208, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston makes contact with or approaching (e.g., within the aforementioned predetermined interval from) wall 77, controller 33 reverses the moving direction and controls the movement of piston 99 toward wall 66 at speed S2 along interval 167 interval 178, as described in FIG. 3B above. At a third speed setting step 210, in response to receiving from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 178, controller 33 sets the movements of piston 99 toward wall 66 at BLS along interval 179, as described in FIG. 3B above. In some embodiments, step 210 is typically concluded when controller 33 receives from PPSA 54 a signal indicating that piston concluded the travel in interval 179, and the method loops back to step 206 and continues until controller 33 receives from processor 39 a control signal to stop irrigating tissue of heart 26.

Controlling Irrigation Pump Between and During Ablation

FIG. 5 is a schematic, pictorial illustration of a movement profile of piston 99 in pump 44 used in a cardiac ablation procedure, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention. In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to operate pump 44 in two operational modes, referred to herein as first and second operational modes.

In some embodiments, the first operational mode is carried out at a predefined interval 311 that does not exceed a predefined distance, such as but not limited to about 0.5 cm from wall 66 or 77. At the first operational mode, controller 33 is configured to operate pump 44 at a non-ablation state 333, such that distal end 22 is operated by physician 30 in heart 26, but is not ablating tissue of heart 26. Note that in an ablation state that will be described in detail below, it is important to pump fluid 88 without changing the movement direction of piston 99, therefore, non-ablation state 333 is used by controller 33 for positioning piston 99 in close proximity to one of walls 66 and 77, and if needed to carry out a specified irrigation within heart 26 as described in detail below.

In some embodiments, in non-ablation state 333, controller 33 is configured to control piston 99 to oscillate over predefined interval 311. In such embodiments, piston 99 is moved within interval 311 in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses the direction of movement of piston 99, so as to pump fluid 88 through inlet-outlet ports 112 and 114. Note that by oscillating piston 99 within interval 311, irrigation assembly 11 irrigates tissue of heart 26 with pulses of fluid 88, defined by the width of interval 311 and by the movement speed of piston 99, or in other words, by the cycle time of one oscillation, e.g., starting and finishing at wall 66.

In other embodiments, controller 33 may control the movement of piston 99 within interval 311 to pump a constant flow of fluid 88, for example, by applying the technique described in FIGS. 3B and 4 above.

In alternative embodiments, controller 33 may control the movement of piston 99 using any other suitable movement profile. For example, in response to instruction signals from processor 39, controller 33 may control the speed of piston 99 to change with time, so as to increase or decrease the amount of fluid 88 pumped by pump 44. This exemplary movement profile may be defined manually by physician 30, or automatically by processor 39 in response to receiving one or more signals related to the medical procedure.

In other embodiments, controller 33 may control pump to stand without moving at any suitable predefined distance from wall 66 and/or 77, typically located within interval 311.

In some embodiments, controller 33 is configured to choose between operating pump 44 in an ablation state 300, typically during tissue ablation, and non-ablation 333 state, typically between ablations. In some cases, controller 33 receives an instruction signal from processor 39 to switch between states 300 and 333.

In some embodiments, in ablation state 300, which corresponds to the aforementioned second operational mode, controller 33 is configured to control piston 99 to move at a selected speed between walls 66 and 77. The selected speed may be constant during the ablation of all ablation sites in heart 26, or may vary between specific ablation sites in heart 26 in response to different ablation conditions (e.g., time, temperature and RF energy applied to tissue). Moreover, during ablation at a specific ablation site, controller 33 may change the movement speed of piston 99, for example, in response to changes in the temperature measured at the

ablation site. In other words, controller 33 is configured to control piston 99 to move at a variable speed during the tissue ablation.

In some embodiments, controller 33 operates pump 44 at ablation state 300 when piston is positioned within predefined interval 322, which is out of and not overlapping with intervals 311. The movement speeds of shaft 105 during predefined distance interval 322 can be in accordance with the movement speeds of shaft 105 described in relation to FIG. 3B.

In other embodiments, controller 33 may choose to switch from the first operational mode (i.e., at non-ablation state 333) to the second operational mode (i.e., at ablation state 300) when piston 99 is still situated within interval 311. Similarly, controller 33 may choose to switch back from the second operational mode to the first operational mode after piston 99 is already situated within interval 311 at the other end of cylinder 111.

In an embodiment, processor 39 may send a first instruction signal to controller 33 to switch to ablation state 300 when piston is within interval 311, in close proximity to wall 66, and a second instruction signal to switch back to non-ablation state 333 when piston is within interval 311, in close proximity to wall 77. In this example embodiment shown in FIG. 5, the arrow representing ablation state 300 starts within interval 311 situated in close proximity to wall 66, and terminates within interval 311 situated in close proximity to wall 77. In such embodiments, controller 33 is configured to operate pump 44 in ablation state 300 until piston 99 makes physical contact with wall 77.

In other embodiments, controller 33 is configured to choose between the first and second operational modes independently of processor 39. For example, in response to receiving, from PPSA 54, position signals indicating that piston 99 is situated within interval 311, controller 33 may switch from ablation state 300 of the second operational mode, to non-ablation state 333 of the first operational mode.

Additionally or alternatively, controller 33 is configured to choose between the first and second operational modes using other sequences, for example, after irrigating an ablation site of heart 26 with a predefined volume of fluid 88, or based on any other suitable signal, or by using any suitable sequence programmed in controller 33.

This particular sequence of FIG. 5 is shown by way of example, in order to illustrate certain problems, such as having sufficient fluid 88 for irrigating tissue during ablation using a pump. As described above, these problems are addressed by embodiments of the present invention that also demonstrate the application of these embodiments in enhancing the performance of a pump operating in a cardiac ablation system. Embodiments of the present invention, however, are by no means limited to these specific sorts of example pump and system, and the principles described herein may similarly be applied to other sorts of pumps and medical ablation systems.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart 400 that schematically illustrates a method for pumping irrigation fluid 88 in a cardiac ablation procedure carried out by irrigation assembly 11, in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention. The method begins at a first piston movement step 402, with controller 33 controlling the move of piston 99 at a selected speed in the direction shown by the arrow of ablation state 300. Note that at step 402, controller 33 operates pump 44 in the second operational mode during the ablation of tissue in heart 26, and controls piston 99 to move toward wall 77.

At a position signal receiving step 404, controller receives from PPSA 54 signals indicative of the respective positions of piston 99 moved toward wall 77, as described in FIG. 3B above. At a piston oscillating step 406, in response to receiving a position signal indicating that piston 99 is situated in close proximity to wall 77 within interval 311, controller 33 controls piston 99 to oscillate over interval 311 using non-ablation state 333, as described in FIG. 5 above.

At a control signal receiving step 408, controller 33 receives (e.g., from processor 33) a control signal indicative of starting the tissue ablation in heart 26. Note that the first irrigation depicted in step 402 is carried out when distal end 22 is positioned at a first ablation site, and the control signal of step 408 is received when distal end 22 is typically positioned at a second, different, ablation site.

At a second piston movement step 410, in response to receiving the control signal, controller 33 switches the operational mode of pump 44 and controls piston 99 to move toward wall 66 for irrigating tissue with fluid 88 during the ablation of the second ablation site. In some embodiments, controller 33 controls piston 99 to move at the speed selected at step 402 above, but in the opposite direction, i.e., toward wall 66. In other embodiments, the ablation parameters at the second ablation site may differ from the ablation parameters of the first ablation site, and therefore, the selected speed of step 410 may differ from the selected speed at step 402 above, so as to carry out suitable irrigation with fluid 88 during the ablation process at the second ablation site.

In some embodiments, after concluding step 401, the method loops back to step 404 and continues until the last ablation site has been ablated by physician 30.

In some embodiments, pump 44 described in FIGS. 1-6 above, and the term "pump" that appears in the claims section may comprise a dual-action pump or any other suitable type of pump.

Although the embodiments described herein mainly address tissue irrigation in cardiac ablation procedures, the methods and systems described herein can also be used in other applications, such as in other cardiac applications, in any type of ablation procedure applied to tissue of any other organ.

It will thus be appreciated that the embodiments described above are cited by way of example, and that the present invention is not limited to what has been particularly shown and described hereinabove. Rather, the scope of the present invention includes both combinations and sub-combinations of the various features described hereinabove, as well as variations and modifications thereof which would occur to persons skilled in the art upon reading the foregoing description and which are not disclosed in the prior art. Documents incorporated by reference in the present patent application are to be considered an integral part of the application except that to the extent any terms are defined in these incorporated documents in a manner that conflicts with the definitions made explicitly or implicitly in the present specification, only the definitions in the present specification should be considered.

The invention claimed is:

1. A method for pumping a fluid in a pump comprising a cylinder having first and second ends, each of the first and second ends comprising respective first and second inlet-outlet ports for alternately in-taking the fluid to the cylinder and outputting the fluid from the cylinder by each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports; the method comprising:

(a) moving a piston within the cylinder between the first and second ends of the cylinder in a first direction at a

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- selected speed so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports;
 - (b) receiving position signals of piston position with respect to the cylinder;
 - (c) when the piston is within a predefined distance from the first end or the second end of the cylinder, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval distance that does not exceed the predefined distance from the first end or from the second end of the cylinder, the piston configured to oscillate in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses direction of movement of the piston without exceeding the predefined interval distance from the first end or second end of the cylinder; and
 - (d) upon receiving a control signal, controlling the piston to move in a second opposite direction to the first direction at a selected speed between the first end and the second end such that the piston moves past the predefined interval distance.
2. The method according to claim 1, and comprising irrigating tissue with the fluid during a medical procedure by coupling at least one of the first and second inlet-outlet ports to a fluid reservoir via a first pipe, and to a catheter via a second pipe.
3. The method according to claim 2, the medical procedure comprising tissue ablation by the catheter, and the control signal indicative of the tissue ablation.
4. The method according to claim 3, the tissue ablation comprising positioning the catheter at first and second ablation sites, and controlling the piston to: (a) move at a first selected speed when the catheter is positioned at the first ablation site, and (b) move at a second, different, selected speed when the catheter is positioned at the second ablation site.
5. The method according to claim 1, the selected speed comprising a constant speed.
6. The method according to claim 1, the selected speed comprising a variable speed.
7. A method for pumping a fluid in a pump comprising a cylinder having first and second ends, each of the first and second ends comprising respective first and second inlet-outlet ports for alternately in-taking a fluid to the cylinder and outputting the fluid from the cylinder by each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports; the method comprising the steps of:
- (a) moving a piston within the cylinder between the first and second ends of the cylinder in a first direction at a selected speed so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports;
 - (b) receiving position signals of piston position with respect to the cylinder;

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- (c) when the piston is within a predefined distance from the first end or the second end of the cylinder, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval distance that does not exceed the predefined distance from the first end or from the second end of the cylinder, the piston configured to oscillate in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses direction of movement of the piston without exceeding the predefined interval distance from the first end or second end of the cylinder; and
 - (d) upon receiving a control signal, controlling the piston to stop oscillating over the predefined interval distance and controlling the piston to move in a second opposite direction to the first direction at a selected speed between the first end and the second end.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising controlling the piston to oscillate in response to receiving position signals of piston position with respect to the cylinder.
9. The method of claim 7, further comprising moving the piston faster in the second opposite direction as compared to the first direction.
10. A method for pumping a fluid in a pump comprising a cylinder having first and second ends, each of the first and second ends comprising respective first and second inlet-outlet ports for alternately in-taking a fluid to the cylinder and outputting the fluid from the cylinder by each of the first and second inlet-outlet ports; the method comprising the steps of:
- (a) moving a piston within the cylinder toward the second end of the cylinder in a first direction at a selected speed so as to pump the fluid through the first and second inlet-outlet ports;
 - (b) receiving position signals of piston position with respect to the cylinder;
 - (c) when the piston is within a predefined distance from the second end of the cylinder, controlling the piston to oscillate over a predefined interval distance that does not exceed the predefined distance from the second end of the cylinder, the piston configured to oscillate in a periodic cycle that alternately reverses direction of movement of the piston without exceeding the predefined interval distance; and
 - (d) upon receiving a control signal, controlling the piston to stop oscillating over the predefined interval distance such that the piston moves in a second opposite direction to the first direction at a selected speed toward the first end such that the piston exceeds the predefined distance from the second end of the cylinder.

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